

## **The lure of the sea: watery agency and aversion in Disney animation**

As a fecund element of life narratives ranging from Genesis to evolution, or as a threat to modern-day human existence in floods and rising sea levels, oceans are intricately related to stories of the past and fears for the future. Children's literary and visual culture partakes in this laden range of meanings, and through fantasy permits consideration of the agency of the sea. No longer just an opaque element of fate or an act of God, water here speaks for itself. My 2015 Routledge book *Children's Literature and the Posthuman* considered how the sea has been represented from *The Water-Babies* to *Percy Jackson*. For Charles Kingsley, water has a near religious ability to cleanse the corrupted morality of Victorian working-class childhoods - very much akin to the punishment narratives surrounding Hurricane Harvey. In Rick Riordan's texts the sea becomes a character who vengefully rejects everyday humans and their pollution while also offering a potential source of strength to a new, more environmentally aware generation. This paper will consider how this varying history of water as agent becomes negotiated by Disney animation, from early responses in *Pinocchio* and *Fantasia* through to the startling representation of the sea in *Moana*. The entanglements of ecology, identity, childhood, fear, and extinction become especially complex when the literal and ontological fluidity of water can be exercised through character agency and visualised through the impossible perspectives of animation.